



City of Gaithersburg Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Gaithersburg Celebrates Arab American Heritage Month

Dr. Shaza M. Ahmed to Accept Official Proclamation

Gaithersburg, MD – (March 20, 2023) The City of Gaithersburg celebrates and honors Arab American Heritage Month in April with programs and a proclamation highlighting the culture, heritage, and achievements of our Arab American neighbors.

An official proclamation designating April 2023 as “Arab American Heritage Month” in the City of Gaithersburg will be presented at the Mayor and City Council meeting on Monday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m. The public is welcome to attend the meeting at City Hall, watch it live on [YouTube](#) or watch it via Zoom by [registering here](#).

Mayor Jud Ashman will present the proclamation to Dr. Shaza M. Ahmed, M.D., a paraeducator with Montgomery County Public Schools who works with children with special needs. Having an autistic child of her own motivated Dr. Ahmed to be more involved and become an advocate for her own child and all students, and their parents, who learn differently. She manages weekly educational sessions for parents on bullying, safety, understanding the system, available resources, and how to be an advocate for themselves and their children.

Dr. Ahmed is actively involved in her children’s school PTAs and volunteers as an administrator for a weekend school. During the pandemic, she volunteered with food distribution and delivering. Dr. Ahmed was born in Sudan and immigrated to the United States in 2004. She lives in the greater Gaithersburg area with her husband and four children.

Activities and exhibits celebrating Arab American Heritage Month include:

Arab American Heritage Month Educational Display

April 2 - 28

[Activity Center at Bohrer Park](#)

Free

The City of Gaithersburg’s Multicultural Affairs Committee celebrates the rich history and cultural influences and heritage of Arab Americans with an educational display.

Drop-In Days at the Museum – Mancala Game Boards

Saturday and Sunday, April 15 and 16

11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

[Gaithersburg Community Museum](#)

Free. No registration.

Join the Community Museum in celebrating Arab American Heritage Month by making Mancala game boards. Mancala is one of the oldest games in the world, with origins in ancient North Africa.

Tasty Books: *Halal Hot Dogs*

April 22, 10:30 a.m.

[Casey Community Center](#)

\$5, [Register online here](#).

Explore the tasty and adventurous world of food and books using all five senses. Stories come to life as they are read aloud and explored with hands-on crafts and snack making. Celebrate Arab American Heritage Month with a reading of *Halal Hot Dogs* by Susannah Aziz. Meet Musa and his family and take a journey through their Friday evening prayer rituals and family treat.

April is dedicated to Arab American Heritage Month, recognizing people with ancestry from a wide range of Arabic-speaking countries and regions in the Middle East and parts of northern Africa.

The United States is home to more than 3.5 million Arab Americans who trace their ancestry to 22 countries stretching from North Africa in the west to the Arabian Gulf in the east. Arabs are ethnically, religiously and politically diverse but descend from a common linguistic and cultural heritage. The number of Marylanders who claim an Arab ancestry has more than doubled since the Census first measured ethnic origins in 1980, and is among the fastest growing Arab populations in the country. The largest number of new Arab immigrants to Maryland come from Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco.

The mission of the Multicultural Affairs Committee is to enrich our City through the promotion of understanding, respect, and appreciation of the many cultures of Gaithersburg. Learn more [here](#).

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